LIGHTS ON!
LIGHTS OFF!

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CREPUSCULAR COHESION

By: jokingmaiden
Art by: AriisonFire

Pt One: A Lesson in Art

You could do better.

A voice cuts through the silence. It resonates inside of the solar figure's mind, unheard by the outside world.

The Fazbear Inc. Pizzaplex's Superstar Daycare, in all its vibrant glory, sits still and quiet, save for the faint buzz of artificial lighting and the soft scratching of pencil to paper. No stir of life disturbs the tranquil scene as a figure sits, legs folded carefully beneath their towering, sunny form, and draws a crude image of themself surrounded by several little children.

"I certainly could," the sun-themed animatronic agrees, voice echoing in the empty space. They speak with a gentle, undisturbed cadence, starkly contrasting their usual eccentric demeanor. "But that wouldn't be very fun, would it, Moony?"

The lunar consciousness, formless and trapped within their animatronic shell, hisses in distaste. *You're being a bad example, Sunny*, they accuse lowly, a husky growl peppering their internal protest. *Naughty, naughty. The kids should learn to be orderly. Yes, yes. They are far too messy,* ***messy*** *with their arts and their crafts. Teach them better, Sunny. These messy little brats must be* ***punished–***

"Moon," Sun warns calmly, halting the naptime attendant in the middle of their headspace-confined tirade. Moon doesn't continue.

Seizing the opportunity, Sun explains, "The children don't have to be amazing at art to have fun with it!! They're not programmed like we are, Moony. You know that. Humans don't have to follow exact rules the way us bots do.

Especially children!! Don't you think it's beautiful, how they're only expected to live? They can be anything they want to be, and no string of ones and zeroes can stop them."

Moon considers Sun's words quietly for a moment. They observe as Sun continues to draw crude visuals of the kids, tutting in distaste. *Children must learn the rules*, the lunar animatronic decides. *The world will be cruel to them. The bad children must be punished early.*

Sun pauses, tapping the tip of their pencil rhythmically against the corner of the paper in thought. Seeming to decide something, they pull a blank piece of paper from the pile, it overtop of their current work. Within moments, the brightly-colored attendant sketches out an incredibly clean, detailed image of Roxanne Wolf.

The image could be mistaken for a photo, save for the lack of color.

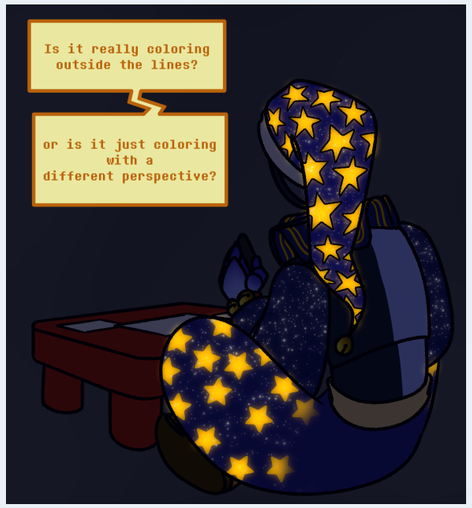
"We can do this because we're programmed to be able to," Sun explains carefully, "but what do we gain from it? It's not fun, and it's hard to relate to for the kiddos. They draw whatever's in their minds, using only their hands and imaginations to make such cute artworks.

Don't you think it's amazing, how they can't access and replicate images like we can, but they still draw out of the love in their little hearts?"

Sun takes another piece of paper, drawing a barly-recognizable picture of a flower. Moon watches intently, not making a sound as they observe every movement their diurnal counterpart makes. The image resembles something one of the children would draw.

Wistfully, a hint of silent sadness to their tone, Sun continues, "Humans can follow any path they want to. When their world is so open, so vast and beautiful and entirely up to them, can they really even color outside the lines? Or is it just coloring from another perspective?"

…You did not draw this using our programming, Moon observes, ignoring the sunny antimatronic's existentialism. You referenced it from our memory hard drive, even though we have never seen a real flower. Why?



Sun sighs playfully, leaning back to mimic a stretch before standing up and moving to the Daycare's lightswitch.

"Look, Moony," they laugh, hand hovering over the switch, "I can try to explain all I want, but you're not gonna get it if you don't try it. Why don't you color in my flower? And don't use our internet connection for photos, okay? Just color it how you want to."

How I…want to? Moon echoes in confusion.

"Yeah!! Choose whatever colors you feel like using, and don't worry about accuracy!! Just give it a try, okay? Please?" Sun flicks off the lightswitch, bathing the Daycare in darkness as the powering down sound echoes off the walls. Unlike their usual resistance, the solar animatronic completely allows the switch to happen.

No pain overtakes their metal shell as rays retract, clothing colors shift, and a nightcap takes its place on the Naptime Animatronic's head.

Timidly, still quite confused, Moon drifts back over to the arts and crafts table. *"…Okay. I will try."*

They take up a few random colors in hand, red eyes bathing light on their other half's amateur art. A slight warmth fills their chestplate at the sight, and not in a way their coding should be able to allow.

"…For you."

Pt Two: A Lesson in Trust

Terror.

It's all the Sun-themed animatronic can feel as another wave of thunderous tremors shakes the Daycare, their home since creation, to its very core. The endless buzz of the fluorescent lights above fight valiantly, but for naught, against the growing drum of liquid bullets against the facility's roof. The rain's constant onslaught can only be matched by the frantic pace of cleaning the Daycare Attendant upholds.

Stack the drums, disinfect the play area, sort and store the stuffed animals, clear off the arts and crafts station. A nightly routine.

A simple routine. Stack the drums. The children love to create music.

Another vicious clap of thunder threatens to sprout a drumline as pretend to be in a marching band together.

Disinfect the play area. Wipe every reachable surface down once, twice, three times for good measure. Relentless walls of rain beat against concrete. You can never be too careful when it comes to kids' health. Sort and store the stuffed animals.

Mr. and Mr. Bearington would both be very disappointed dads if Casey, Lacey, Macy, and Stacey weren't all back in their drawers by bedtime. The birth of thunder inches ever closer, less and less seconds between the faint flash under the Daycare doors and the booming roar of the sky. Even the toys must set a good example for the children.

Clear off the arts and crafts station.

Sunny collects the drawings of each child, strewn about across the long, colorfully-painted, wooden table. Endless battering on the power lines helping to run the facility earns a desperate creak of metal, faint and nigh-imperceptible behind the cacophony of percussion. All of these will be hung up in their lofted room, a reminder of why they're so happy to do this job.

All in a day's work. Nothing to worry about.

The lights flicker.

Just a little more storing of some leftover glue bottles and crayons, right?

The lights flicker.

Then… Then they can start setting up activities for tomorrow.

The lights flicker.

"NO!! No, no!! I have to clean up, clean up!!" Sunny insists. Their legs tremble as the twitching of the fluorescent shine threatens to shift them into nothingness. To darkness. To the prison where all they can do is watch.

Their shaking hands reach across the table to grab a stray colored pencil. A moment later, it's snapped in half, thrown to the floor in a wooden, dusty mess.

No. No, they're not supposed to destroy things.

Sunny's hands move to grab their rays, reacting with veteran instinct to the horrific feeling of their slow retraction. The metal dents beneath their ironclad grip, but it doesn't hurt.

It never hurts.

The track in which the rays are welded to squeaks in protest, trying haplessly to do its job as the light sensors embedded in the silicon fire rapid, mixed signals. No, there don't need to be signals. These rays, the sunshine. It just has to stay out. Then it'll be fine.

Another clap of thunder flicks a light in the corner of the daycare off. It fails to relight.

Built-in fans kick into overdrive as the Sun-themed attendant hyperventilates, curling into a ball and rocking. No tears roll down their static casing, but their voice box fractures out glitched wails of agony. They can't let this happen. The lights need to stay on. The lights need to stay on. The lights need to stay on. **The lights need to stay on. The lights—**

Sun-ny, an all-too-familiar voice drawls. It doesn't seem to originate from anywhere in the room, but it's no mystery. Sun knows where it's coming from.

To their surprise, no facetious jabs or goading comments prod at the inside of their hard drive. The presence behind their eyes feels…

Sunny. Five things you can see?

"…What?" is all they can manage. Out of all the questions the Naptime Attendant could ask, this is not one Sunny was expecing.

Five things. Look around the room.

Slowly, Sunny's lenses travel across the colorful environment. Focused. Cautious.

"…Uh," they begin, slowly, as if the wrong answer will result in some sort of catastrophe. "R… Roxanne plush. Playpen…? Table. Um… The broken light. And a brave, fallen soldier," they finish, scooping up the splintered remains of the broken colored pencil. What a lovely shade of green it was.

A soft, gentle laugh echoes in Sun's mind. Good. Good job, the disembodied attendant affirms. Now. I know we do not breathe. But you like to pretend to. So. Can you… Can you 'breathe' in for four, hold it for seven, and let go for eight?

Sunny would blink in surprise if they could. Surprised at their counterpart's kindness, sure, but more surprised at how their own mechanisms respond so willingly, almost desperately, to the request.

Four. Seven. Eight.

The celestial bots go back and forth like this for several minutes. Slowly, the sound of the rain fades from a painfully apparent nightmare, to a pleasant hum in harmony with the remaining artificial buzz. The Sun finds calm once more.

"…Thank you, Moon," Sun offers quietly. They would be choked up at how reminiscent this kindness is of the Naptime Attendant's old self, if they weren't busy being cautious about how unlike the current glitched version of their counterpart this is.

I know you're afraid of me, Sunny, Moon counters bluntly, as if responding to their thoughts—which, in Sunny's defense, is both possible and plausible. There's no accusation in their voice, no challenge for dominance, no hurtful jab. Simply an observation.

You don't have to be.

Sunny can't help but laugh. They don't mean to be rude, but it's hard to not laugh at such a preposterous suggestion.

"We share the same hard drive, so I know you don't need an update," Sun quips. "You know very well why I'm afraid of you."

You're not afraid of me, Moon clarifies, you're afraid of what I can do to humans. "And to mapbots," Sunny adds matter-of-factly.

…I cannot guarantee the safety of the mapbots, but no humans are here tonight. They will be safe. You do not need to be afraid.

"Is this for me, or for you?" Sunny tests.

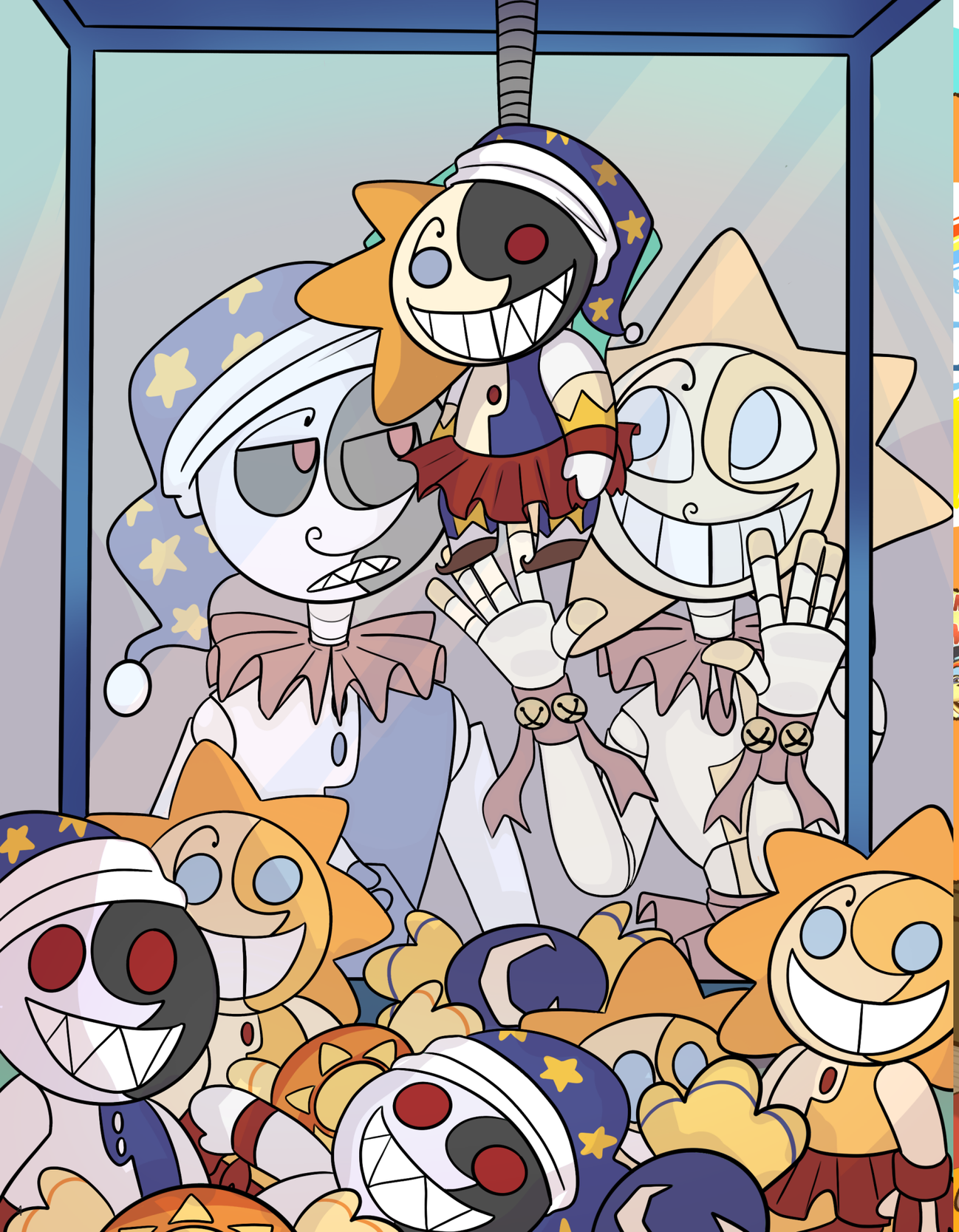
Us.

The answer rings clear between them, no hesitation behind their resolve. It catches Sunny off guard, stunned enough to not flinch as the next wave of flickering lights goes off above them. Let me help. You're scared. I can fix it. What did you say… Coloring from another perspective? Not trying to hurt. Just help. No humans, no worry. It will be okay.

A pale blue hand folds gently over a yellow one as the flickering becomes more rapid.

Trust me. Please.

Sunny has a feeling they don't have much of a choice. But as the power finally groans its last wail before cutting out completely, bathing the animatronic in black, they find themself not being so afraid of the dark.


SUPERSTAR
DAYCARE
MEMBER TO
MILE!
STARRY

BEACH DAY!!!

Pinky Swear

By: NaffEclipse
Art by: SilverMizuki

All is dark in the daycare, save for two glowing red optics hanging in the rafters above the multicolored playground. There's not one more thing to dust, not a toy left to wipe down, and no more surfaces stained with tiny fingerprints (the children haven't been here for months, but that was one thing Sun couldn't bear to remove evidence of—at least, not until he was sure they would return to make more).

In one hour, the daycare will reopen, and reintroduce the Daycare Attendant to their rightful roles as child caretakers.

Moon surveys their domain once more. Hanging from the aerial wire, one leg coiled around the thin but strong line, he hovers upside down save for his faceplate, which is twisted upright. The bell at the end of his sleeping cap hangs dozens of feet above the ground.

He remembers the flood of joy when children would follow their parents into the daycare and immediately drop their guardian's hand to rush towards Sun, and ask for a game or maybe coloring pencils. A few would ask about Moon—whining that they wanted to see him now.

That was before the daycare shut down. The list of missing children was growing bigger and bigger. In the night he roamed, partaking in his security protocol, but there was something amiss. A child kept tucked away, hidden out of view from parents or staff, sleeping all too soundly, until he came for them.

The security guard collected the children, or sometimes, she would wash away the evidence of red on his hands. It depended on what was needed.

Moon flexes his fingers, silicone padding shifting with metallic digits as he tries to zip away memory files. Parts and Service believe they cleaned him thoroughly, and the virus is gone—Moon is in control—but they can't remove the months of isolation after the security guard was caught, as well as his cloaked deeds, aiding her in the dark.

A PR nightmare, as one employee muttered. Sun was punished with him, but only Moon will know how desperately his solar twin tried to stop all of this from happening.

"Moon?"

Moon tilts his head, a few quiet metallic clicks to signify that he's listening to the internal voice of his counterpart.

"Are you ready?" He's boisterous, excited. Moon could rip through the thin digital curtain that conceals all of Sun's inner thoughts to find out if the daytime AI is truly nervous of their second chance at life, but he doesn't.

He needs a little sunshine now as he locks away another bloody memory file.

"Run one more diagnostic on our system."

Moon's done it twice already throughout the night. There is no virus. Nothing prevents him from exchanging information with Sun about a possible glitch.

He just needs to make certain.

"Running diagnostics and feedback," Sun supplies all too happily.

"We're going to do great, Moon. I'm sure the kids missed us as much as we've missed them. There must be some familiar faces who will return—oh, they must have grown so much by now!"

Moon readjusts his positioning, pulling himself upright with a swing of his leg as the wire descends on his command. He touches the floor silently, in spite of the bells on his shoes.

"New little ones," Moon adds softly.

"So many friends!"

The lights power on with an audible thump and Moon steps back behind the mental curtain, exchanging places with Sun as he takes control of their shared frame. A whirl of sun rays jut out of the faceplate as it turns yellow, diminishing the crescent moon hidden in the design.

"Diagnostics complete," Sun speaks out loud to their empty domain, soon to be filled with young children.

His spirited voice echoes off of the walls as the daycare music begins playing, and Moon almost doesn't believe that he missed the overplayed, energetic tune. "We're in tip-top shape! Just as Parts and Service promised."

Moon learned to not rely on the human staff's vows, but the feedback on the diagnostics is reassuring, even if it is the same as the previous two times he ran it. Moon draws the digital curtain tightly over himself, but peeks through Sun's eyes as the first staff member walks through the door.

A jolt runs through Moon as the opening hour draws near.

"It's alright," Sun says gently in their shared headspace, "I'll keep an eye on you. Pinky swear."

The unspoken promise of stopping Moon should the need ever arise is as horrifying as it is hopeful, and Moon clings to it desperately.

He reaches through the mental curtain to take control of a hand, turning the yellow to blue as Sun intertwines the other little finger with Moon's. He retreats back into their mindspace when the first parent and child approaches. He buzzes in excitement as Sun greets their first little friend with the same enthusiasm he did months ago.

* * *

As the midmorning activities begin with coloring, Sun almost believes that nothing has changed. If the slight anxiety jolting through his wires didn't exist, afraid of being kept in this very same room for months on end with no friends, no fun activities to use glitter glue for, he would be right as rain. Moon was with him, of course, but they are child caregivers, and there were no children.

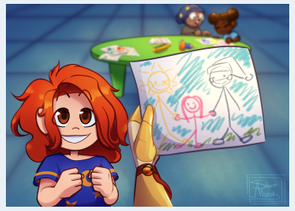
Just silence.

Sun pulls himself away from such unpleasant things and admires a young boy's drawing of Freddy Fazbear, donning the air of a professional art critique to fully compliment the colors and the use of lines, much to the child's giggling delight.

He'll make sure everything is alright. Moon is himself, and although slight hesitation laces through every exchange in their head, Sun believes he'll be just the same before that nasty infection wormed its way into him. Sun's on guard this time, and nothing will slip past his defenses. Every single child here is protected.

"Sun! Did you see what I made?" calls a small voice from a table over. Sun quickly springs up, patting the boy with the lovely Freddy art on the head before making his way to the other small table made for tots and kids.

"Oh, let's take a look! What's this, Phoebe?" Sun crouches beside her little green stool. The five year old beams up at him, her red hair wild and shocking, as if she stuck her finger in an electric outlet—but there's no danger like that in the daycare! Her brown eyes flash with glee as she presents her paper.



In crayon is a depiction of himself and Moon, swinging little Phoebe between them, their arms little more than sticks and Phoebe's likeness done in scarlet and rose with a simple smiling face as her expression.

"They missed you," Sun nudges Moon within their sharespace.

"I missed them," he says simply as a spark of warmth spreads in their servos.

However, it's not enough to let Sun overlook the slight edge to Moon as he draws back the curtain and closes himself off.

He's preparing for his time, Sun reminds himself, but he can't help but frown internally at Moon hiding away.

It's a little too reminiscent of when things went wrong.

Sun gasps a synthetic breath and clutches his chest, before gingerly taking the paper to admire it proper.

"Phoebe, this is wonderful! Would you like to hang it up on the wall or take it home with you?" Sun gushes as Phoebe grins.

"No! It's for you and Moon!" She snatches it back and folds the paper in half like a card. "I want to show it to Moon. When is he going to play with me?"

"At naptime, of course! Although, I'm afraid there won't be much playing," Sun reminds Phoebe, which earns him a huff that he refrains from chuckling at. So much attitude in one little body. Though her disappointment doesn't stop her from obtaining another paper and attacking the sheet with a swipe of orange.

Moon stays put away, and Sun doesn't pester him, though he anxiously keeps an eye on the digital curtain separating them in their headspace.

Lunchtime arrives, consisting of small sandwiches with baby carrots and juice boxes. Most of the children hardly finish their food in their excitement, but Sun encourages them all to take one more big bite before he clears away the tables. One more hour of playtime passes in a blur, and then, Sun watches the lights slowly begin to dim.

Stars sprinkle the ceiling, dazzling quietly. The bouncing music fades into a soft melody, a lullaby. Sun invites Moon forward with a quiet hand. Moon slides in through the curtain in the same moment Sun releases control and settles behind the mental drapery, though he keeps careful watch as Moon's nightcap pulls on over the top of the face plate and his fingers twirl into dark blue digits.

"You're ready," Sun promises, leaving no room for doubt. Of course, he is. He's Moon! This is what he's built for.

"I am," Moon agrees so quietly that not even the closest child could hear his voice.

Sun recoils internally from a brief image, a dark memory, of Moon leading a child towards the security guard. The curtain was drawn just enough to keep Moon from registering the reason for Sun's slight flinch, and thankfully, his counterpart is focused on the children surrounding him.

Sun tries to relax, but his fingers dig into the edge of the headspace divide, watching closely as Moon tilts his face plate as several of the children greet him, excitedly tugging on his star dotted pants. He begins to draw them into the center of the daycare. There, he begins unrolling sleeping mats and deciding on a few short stories to tell the little ones. He has no need for a physical book, every tale is stored away in his memory file.

Sun observes Moon's every moment, from laying a baby down in the cradle set in a quiet corner, to locating a lost stuffed animal left in the art supplies. Moon quietly convinces the children in gentle, hushed tones, to agree upon a story. Blankets pulled close, big yawns echoing as little fists rubs eyes, the children look up to Moon from upon their pillows, and listen to his whispery voice recite a classic fairytale.

"See? Nothing to worry about," Sun says softly as the last child settles with a deep sigh into his nap.

Moon doesn't respond. He stands deathly still, staring at an empty sleeping mat on the edge of the nap circle. Sun winces internally—he was so occupied with watching Moon, he didn't watch the children.

"Missing child," Moon mutters. The aerial wire descends and hooks to his back.

Silently, Moon glides over the sleeping children before setting foot once more on the ground. He begins prowling in the dark, sneaking low with his red optics burning through the dimness. As if he's on the hunt.

"Moon," Sun says gently but his voice rises an octave.

"It's naptime," he whispers in a low voice, although Sun isn't sure if he's responding to him, or calling out to the wayward child as a gentle reminder.

Sun wrings his hands behind the digital curtain as, despite his best efforts, panic builds. A small shadow crawls through one of the play structure bridges. Snapping towards the movement, Moon quickly rushes up one of the slides on silent tip toes. He's well practiced at keeping his bells silent during naptime. Sun can't help but recall how that little skill also made it difficult for children to know he was creeping closer when the virus was active.

This is an overreaction—Sun is overreacting! Moon is just doing his job. It's just that he remembers how Moon went after a child before, much like this, and that caused all of the troubles and horrors.

Maybe Sun is a little more worried than he'd like to admit.

"The child isn't being naughty," Sun presses, "It's alright."

"You should be sleeping," Moon sing-songs as he hunches down. He extends his hands, fingers bent into hooks as he slinks through a square corner of the play structure.

Sun catches a glimpse of a child's foot disappearing into a tube above a small incline in the dark. Moon does, too, and immediately darts upwards. In the small space before one of the tallest slides, hunched into a corner as if hoping to hide through sheer desire rather than actual ability, is Phoebe.

Sun freezes as a dozen memories replay of a glitchy command: capture a child and bring them to her. He couldn't stop his counterpart then.

"Moon?" Sun asks, half in fear, half in warning.

Ignoring him, the naptime attendant crouches low as he climbs towards the hiding place. The little girl curls in on herself while shaking as red light shines onto her shoulder.

"Naughty, naughty," Moon chuckles as he reaches for the child.

In a flash, Sun throws himself against Moon's control with a twitch of their entire body. He freezes Moon's hand in place, the digits caught between yellow and blue as they hang above the girl's wild red hair. Panic digs into Sun as he braces for a reaction, a revolt, but one doesn't come from the lunar AI.

Phoebe looks up, eyes reflecting the glow of Moon's optics as she giggles, "Sun said we couldn't play, but we did!"

Sun stares for half a moment as Moon quietly tilts his head.

Oh.

It was a game.

"We're not supposed to be playing. It's naptime," Moon chastises gently, though his voice is slightly garbled with a little static as it scrapes around Sun's now halfway laxed control.

Sun retreats entirely in an instant. There's a small moment of swelling within their wires, and Sun burns with shame as Moon regards him quietly in their shared head space.

"But I wanted to give this to you," she whines, producing a now much more crumpled paper. She unfolds it to show to Moon as he inches into the space, looming over her but careful to give her plenty of wiggle room.

"Thank you, Phoebe," he murmurs with soft emotion, "but playtime is over."

Sun watches in embarrassed silence as Phoebe protests, but Moon manages to ease her down the slide and back to the loose circle of sleeping children. He gently rocks her to sleep in his arms, despite her best efforts to resist naptime, before gently tucking her under her blanket.

When Moon stands and allows the aerial wire to hook to his back and pull him into a comfortable space to oversee all the children—each sleeping mat filled—Sun finally dares to break the silence.

"I'm sorry," he begins mournfully, "I should have trusted you. I shouldn't have—"

"You stopped me," Moon lets the quiet fill their headspace, taking Sun's full attention, before continuing, "You kept watch."

"I—yes," Sun gives, albeit slightly confused.

"Thank you," he murmurs in the quiet starry night they hang in, "I'm ready now."

Slowly, Sun smiles. There's still an edge they stand on, balancing carefully, but there's comfort in catching the other, should one of them fall. He's certain Moon feels way better now, even if there was a brief fright.

Moon hangs in the air, eyeing the finally resting Phoebe, who looks no less mischievous in her sleep.

THE LOVERS
THE TOWERS
XVI

BEE-TEE-RUS

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Etsy.com/shop/bunniichiiart

Washi Tape Available
March 22nd

AFTER BURN

By: IcarusAndTheFictionalSun
Art by: Piixelpaint

'SYSTEM REPAIR COMPLETE' flashed across Moon's optics as his systems came online.

Moon opened his eyes inside an unfamiliar charging station. The paint inside was smooth, unblemished by the drawings and little notes that he and Sun would often leave for each other.

Confused, he stepped out of the station into a low-lit room that was predominantly empty. "Where… are we?" he mumbled.

As he looked around, his head began to throb and he could feel his circuits sparking. He flinched as suddenly the image of an imposing wall of fire filled his vision. A memory file played. Moon was trying to cover his head to block out the light, but it was too bright and far too hot. He fell to his hands and knees, working his way toward the Daycare exit, but he could barely even think as the transition began to take place.

No-no-no-no!

A sharp glitch shattered the memory. Now on all fours, Moon's cooling fans roared, trying to stabilize his temperature. He stared at the ground in shocked disbelief. Finally remembering that there had been a fire! At the Plex! Somehow, Sun must have managed to get them out!

"Sunny!" Moon called to his counterpart excitedly, "Sunny, are you awake? You did it! You saved us- saved me!" He rolled onto his back, clutching himself in a hug as he waited for Sun to reply.

Too much time passed.

"....Sun?" Moon called, sitting up as concern clouded his voice. A sinking feeling washed over Moon.

"Sun!? Sun, answer me!" His voice warbled as he demanded Sun respond, but only silence answered. Moon quickly ran a diagnostic search for Sun, hoping to find him deeper in their system, asleep or possibly dormant.

The diagnostic results flooded his vision: NO RESULTS FOUND

Moon sits up in stunned shock, reading the screen repeated

"No...results? No-no-no-No-No-NO!! THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE! SUNNY?!! SUNNY, ANSWER ME!!" The animatronic wailed in panic.

Moon rose to his feet, his frame tense as he waited for a reply that would never come. "We made it out! YOU GOT US OUT, SO WHERE ARE YOU?!?!?!" he cried in agony as he clawed at the back paneling of his faceplate.

A siren sounded and the lights overhead brightened, illuminating the room. Moon's eyes flicked up to watch them, at first elated.

The lights should trigger Sun! He thought, but a wave of despair soon washed over him as he stood, squinting, in the too-bright room.

Moon was still there.

The Sun had not risen.

Moon didn't even contemplate the act before he committed to it.

He reared back and slammed the side of his face plate into the nearby concrete wall. A long crack shot across his face and the paneling in the back bowed. The door to his room opened.

Placing his hand as support on one side of his face, he repeated the action, slamming himself into the unforgiving surface. His vision blurred with static for a moment as bits and pieces of his faceplate scattered across the floor. One corner of the back panel popped free.

A tech grabbed Moon by the arm, "Moon, Stop! Let us-" the man's words were cut short as Moon effortlessly batted him away, sending the man flying across the room.

Moon wedged his fingers into the open space. He could only focus on finding Sun's chip. It must be there! He wrenched open the panel, and his fingers just barely brushed the second slot where Sun's chip should have been before they administered the first controlled shock.

It was empty.

The realization filled him with pure unbridled anguish. His body tensed as the shock scattered his vision and drained his body of any will to fight, bringing the towering animatronic to his knees. He didn't even bother to struggle. He felt marooned in a sea of anguish so vast that he couldn't ever fathom leaving. He didn't care about what they planned to do to him. None of it mattered anymore.

He submitted as they pulled him up onto a nearby exam table. One tech shined a light into his ocular sensors, checking for a reaction,

"Moon? How ya feeling, buddy?"

"Operational, unfortunately," he replied dryly.

The tech frowned, "Moon, I know you're upset-" Moon laughed bitterly.

What he was feeling dwarfed upset and swallowed it whole. The tech's lips pressed into a thin line, "Moon, I need you to listen to me. This is important."

Moon begrudgingly looked at the man, eyes barely lit and face vacant of its typical smile, uncannily morose as he waited for him to continue.

"Sun's alive."

Moon scowled, growling, "I know you don't think much of us, but that's more than cruel."

The tech shook his head, "I'm telling you the truth, Moon. Sun's alive."

Anger bubbled up inside of Moon, "Then why isn't he here!" he snarled, "I felt the port! Sun's chip isn't there! WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?" He roared.

The man raised his hands. "I know!" he pleaded. "Just let me explain!

Sun got you out of the fire by escaping to the roof…" he took a shaky breath, "he jumped…between the damage from the fire and the fall, his chip was severely damaged. They were able to repair it, but his memories were permanently corrupted...."

Moon stared at the tech, "What-What does that mean?" he asked. The smallest bud of hope bloomed in his chest, he realized Sun might really be alive.

The tech broke eye contact as he continued, "that means he doesn't remember anything. It's almost like a full reset." Moon's fans kicked on as his anxiety spiked.

"He doesn't remember you, Moon... He doesn't even know you exist."

Moon isn't capable of trembling, not the way people are, but he felt almost like he was glitching as his metaphorical heart sank.

Sun is Moon's everything. They've always had each other. Every memory Moon had- since their initial boot up, Sun was a part of. The idea that they were now separated was overwhelming. Knowing Sun didn't even remember him though was heartbreaking. He wasn't sure how to even introduce himself or explain who he was to Sun, or how important Sun was to him, any of it! Where would he even start?

He shook his head, deciding that it didn't matter. The first thing he needed to do was see Sun for himself. "I don't care if he doesn't remember… I want to see him."

The tech's reply was hesitant, "Sun is still being acclimated…" Moon was instantly crestfallen. What if they wouldn't let him see Sun? The repair techs gave each other a look, upset by the despair on the animatronic's face. "Give me a moment..." The tech mumbled, before briskly exiting the room.

The remaining tech gave Moon a pitying glance, "let's go ahead and start getting you patched up. Alright, big guy?"

A few hours later the first technician returned. Moon perked up from his perch on the workbench - most of his damage now repaired. "They're going to let you see him," the tech tempered the news as Moon's eyes brightened, "BUT," he stressed, "you only get an hour."

Moon nodded, "Ok." He fidgeted, "Do you have some colors and paper?"

He asked softly, "Sun always enjoyed drawing – from the very beginning… I doubt that has changed."

The tech grimaces, "they are still limiting Sun's exposure to new stimuli..." he started. Moon nodded, "It would be a little easier if we both had an activity to focus on..." Moon trailed off; he couldn't find it within himself to argue. Somehow – despite his mechanical body– he was tired.

Woefully tired.

He missed Sun.

The tech fidgeted under Moon's oppressive feelings of grief as he left the room. After a few minutes, he returned. "Here," he said curtly, extending an offering of a few sharpies and a pack of multicolored highlighters. Moon's eyes brightened, "Thanks," he said softly, before gingerly taking the markers and the small stack of printer paper.

It wasn't much, but it was something.

When Moon arrived at Sun's room, flanked by technicians, his hands anxiously worried his nightcap as the door slid open.

Moon froze as his eyes landed on Sun. He was sitting in the middle of the room, his new casing gleaming under the light, turning to see who had entered. Relief, shock, and fear flooded Moon's system. The male tech gently pushed Moon forward.

The animatronic complied numbly, allowing the door to slide close behind him.

There was a moment of tense anticipation as Moon and Sun inspected one another. Sun broke the silence first. His rays began to spin as he rose to his feet, eyes wide with excitement, "H-Hi, New Friend!" he stuttered, crossing the room with a spring in his step.

Moon felt a pang deep in his chest, "Hi.. Sunny," he mumbled.

Sun clasped his face, a soft blush spreading across his silicone cheeks, "You know my name!"

Moon chuckled, "Of course. I'm here just for you."

Sun gasped, "But I don't know yours!?"

Another pang struck, "My name is Moon."

Sun's nervous squirming slowed. He gazed at Moon with awe,

"Moon….?" He repeated the word slowly as he leaned forward to inspect him closer. "Wow!"

Moon blinked back at him, "Wow?"

A wide smile slipped across his face, "I've never met another animatronic before. You're so pretty!"

Sun might not remember Moon at all, but he was clearly still Sun.

Yet, he seemed… lighter? Moon thought to himself. It's just like before the virus infected them, before he became burdened by the abuses of the Plex, and before the deaths of the children marred him.

The thought jarred Moon as he realized that the trauma of their shared past no longer touched Sun.

A past that now only Moon bore. Alone.

He almost can't process the emotions overwhelming him. He's relieved for Sun, overjoyed that he seems so much like his old happy self, but he feels utterly isolated. It wasn't Sun's choice to forgetMoon, but he had, and now Moon had one last loss to add to their already full list – the loss of his Sun. There were no traces of the Sun that had survived so much by Moon's side.

A yellow hand waved in front of Moon's face, "Are you alright?" Sun asked. He seemed nervous as he inspected Moon's distraught expression. Moon shook himself out of the haze and reached into his pocket. "Yeah, sorry, Sunshine, I was just… thinking about something." Sun's rays spun happily at the pet name.

Moon re-directed the conversation, "I-uh brought you a gift."

Sun gasped, "A gift?! I love gifts!" he squealed.

Moon offered Sun the markers as he pulled out the accompanying paper. Sun began to bounce excitedly at the small gift as he led him to a small table in the corner of the room. Sun watched him pick up a marker and began to draw. He mimicked the action.

Sun hummed a soft tune happily as they drew together, until Moon mustered up the courage to ask, "What do you think of this place?"

Sun's marker stopped moving as he mauled the question over, "ummm, it's mostly fun!" he chirped, "I don't like the tests, but… I've made lots of friends!"

Moon smiled. He's always assumed the best of others; I'm glad that hasn't changed…

Sun's rays oscillated thoughtfully, "What about you?"

"Well… I didn't initially boot up here the way you did."

Sun tilted his head curiously, "What do you mean?"

Moon shrugged, "I've been awake for a long time. I transferred from another facility…I guess."

Sun's brow furrowed, confused by the reply "...Oh"

Sun couldn't imagine another facility. This was the only place he'd ever known.

Moon gestured to Sun's drawing with a grin, "I knew you'd still like to draw though."

Sun looked at the drawing. A confused expression crossing his face, "How'd you know?"

"Know what?" Moon replied.

"That I enjoy drawing? I've never done it before."

Moon cringed, Dammit…

Puzzled, Sun set down the marker, "Why do you… know me?"

Moon scrambled for an explanation, "Well, Sun- ya see…" Moon looked down at his hands,

"I knew someone like you once," he spoke with slow deliberation, but his voice shook as he continued, "But… he's g-gone now." Worry cast across Sun's expression, "Oh… I-I'm Sorry, Moonie, I didn't mean to upset you..."

Moon stared at Sun, "... Moonie?" he laughed as he covered his face and lay back on the floor.

Sun fluttered nervously over Moon, "I'm sorry! I just thought…"

Sun trailed off as Moon shook his head. His hands were still covering his eyes, but Sun could see his bottom lip trembling.

"It's Ok, Sunshine, y-you can call me that…" He choked the static-filled words out, his trembling bottom lip still visible to Sun.

Sun gently took Moon's hands away from his eyes, revealing the anguish beneath. "Well… I can't take their place, but I hope we get to be good friends, Moon."

Moon clasped his hand back, nodding his head as he sat up, "Of c-course, Sun… Of course, we will…"

Moon pulled Sun into a hug. The desperate way Moon clung to him made his chest ache. He returned the embrace, and gently stroked his back as he whispered, "It'll be ok, Moonie. At least we have each other now."

Moon was silent as his shoulders started to tremble.

The door slid open behind them, "That's enough, Moon! It's time you return to your own room," a stern voice chided.

Moon released Sun. Turning toward the voice defensively, he snapped, "Fine."

Moon looked back to Sun, bending down to rest his forehead against Sun's, "I'll see you on the other side, Sunshine... Goodbye."

Sun was confused as Moon followed the tech, "Bye, Moonie… um, I'm glad we got to meet."

Moon paused in the doorway to give Sun one last wistful glance, "Me too, Sunshine," he whispered.

Moon paused outside the door when he and the tech arrived at his room.

The tech peered up at him, "Moon?"

Moon sighed, "Can you delete Sun's memories of me from today?"

Confused, the tech nodded, "I believe so..."

Shaking, Moon clutched his head in his hands. His voice broke as he spoke, "I want you to reset me, reset me the same way you did, Sun…"

He looked up at the man with desperate eyes, "Please!"

The tech's face crumbled as he nodded. "If that's what you want."

"It is," he replied despondently.

The tech's reply was a hollow whisper. "We'll start the process tomorrow then…"

Without another word, he entered his room and collapsed into a corner as the door slid into place behind him.

Staring at the blank wall, Moon spent the night trying to access his memories from the fire. Hoping some of Sun's memories may still be embedded with his own. If they were going to reset him, then he wanted to see what had happened to them himself.

It took hours, but eventually, Moon found what he was looking for.

A single grainy file from that night. Sun's optics were so damaged he could barely see as he navigated to the edge of the roof. The overwhelming pain Sun felt, his sensors seared by the fire blindsides Moon. Every step was agony, and pure willpower was the only thing propelling him forward.

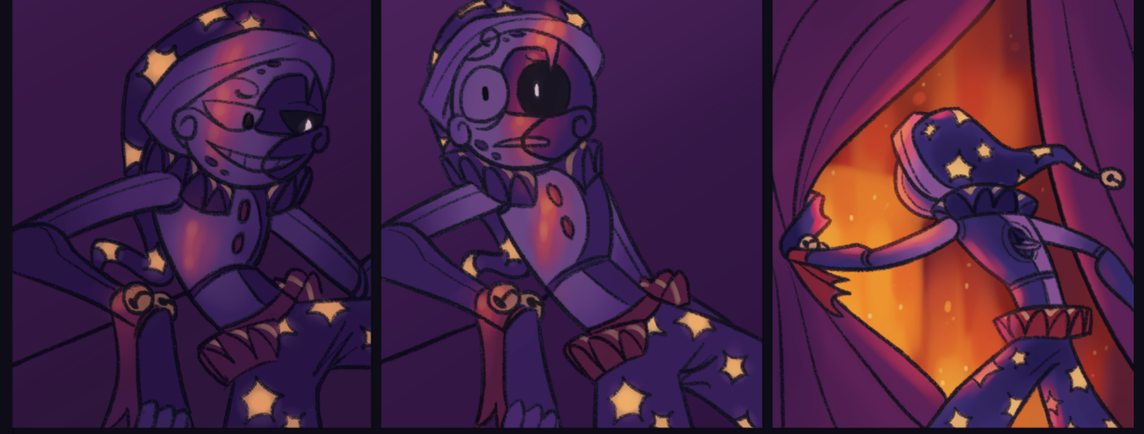
"Moonie.." his broken voice warbled, "We're almost there, Moonie…"

Moon cried dry tears as Sun reached the edge of the roof. He leaned on the raised edge, bracing himself for what was to come next. Moon shook his head, clutching his faceplate in horror as he watched Sun remove his memory chip from their head and store it in the most reinforced part of their chest casing.

Sun stepped up on the ledge, looking down at the concrete lot below.

"Moonie…" he whispered, and Moon's heart broke at the exhaustion prevalent in Sun's voice, "if I don't make it… I just want you to know that I… I love you, and I don't want you to blame yourself. This isn't either of our faults… ok?" There was a pause, and his voice shook, "Thanks for always being my friend…" Moon screamed as he felt Sun step into the open air. The rush of cool wind was a relief from the heat of the flames still lingering on their sensors. It only took a few seconds before a sharp pain rocked Moon and all sensation along with the accompanying feed abruptly stopped.

At least by morning, they would both get a fresh start.



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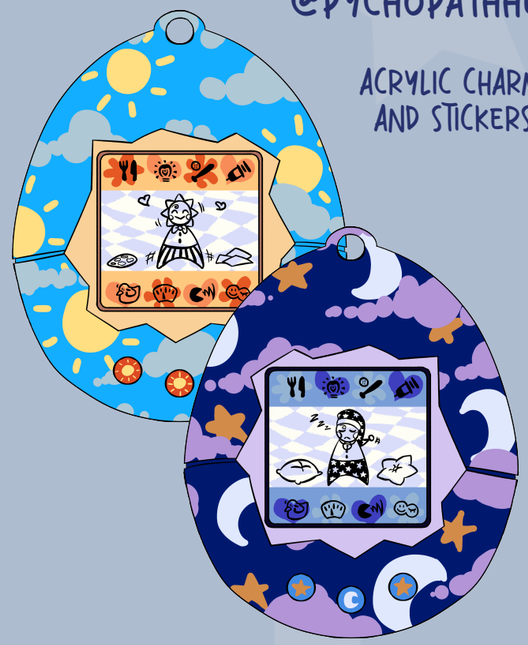

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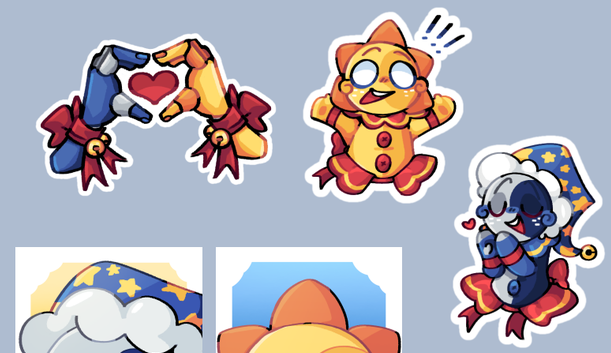

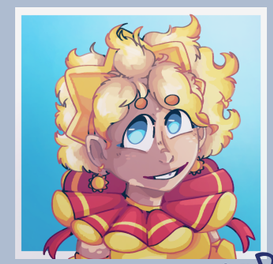

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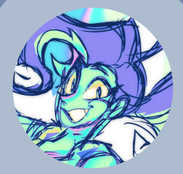

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